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EMU alumna Desyrée Nicole talks about journey from athlete to fashion designer

AARON HUGHES
MANAGING EDITOR

Eastern Michigan University alumna and stylist Desyrée Nicole visited campus for a series of events as part of National Girls and Women in Sports Day on Wednesday, Feb. 7.

Fashion." Despite the success, Nicole did not originally see herself in the world of fashion.

"So I didn't know I wanted to be in fashion. I think I was curious, and when a situation presented itself where it didn't work out, I was like okay, let me build off that curiosity. Like what's the worse that can happen, I move back to Michigan?"

and I think me as a person," Nicole said.

Her recent spring and summer 2023 collection was dedicated to small-town kids with big dreams. She credits the inspiration from her hometown of Waterford, Mich., calling back to memories of the Rolladium, Summit Place Mall, and playing basketball with her friends.

"Don't get me wrong we wore our Pradas, our Ye's, our GIRBAUD jeans, and oversize white tees. There was definitely an identity there. But as far as someone creating it, I don't think we seen that from Michigan. Maybe that's why I feel so confident moving through the space, is because I came from where I came from. Like you all [other designers] lived in New York your whole life and we are at the same spot. Imagine if I grew up in New York and I was exposed to so much more, who knows where I would be," Nicole said.

Nicole also acknowledged that being born and raised in Michigan has helped her stay connected and focused on her goals.

"But I think being where I'm from, it kept me grounded. It kept me and my purpose. And I think I've instilled that throughout the collections and trying to just bring out those vibes, like the old school cars," Nicole said. "I think the small town big dreams is just who I really am as a person. Yeah, I might come from there, but that ain't exactly who I am or will be. I've never let my situation or where I can come from really define me. I think it just fueled the fire a little bit."

Now based in New York with her partner Gabriella Paulino, Nicole is grateful that her alma mater reached out to her to celebrate National Girls and Women in Sports Day.

"It feels nostalgic, it feels weird, but it feels dope. That they [EMU] recognized, and I would say, gave me the opportunity to come back and speak because it doesn't happen often and it doesn't happen all the time. Where I would say the ideal person they want to bring in is also the person that went here and experience everything that they want these kids to know. So I'm very thankful for everybody that reached out and brought me here because I think it's dope. I wish people came back and spoke to me. I don't know if I would have showed up, but I wish that was there for options," Nicole said.

Nicole hopes that success keeps coming and that in 2024 more celebrities will take notice of Todd Patrick. On her bucket list of celebrities she hopes to wear Todd Patrick this year are Tyler the Creator, Jay-Z, Bad Bunny, and Queen Latifah.

During her visit on Wednesday she participated in a Q&A session hosted by EMU students, an alumni athlete panel, a student alumni mixer, and a Halftime Show Style Walk during the women's basketball team game against Akron. Before starting her Q&A session she encouraged EMU students to chase their dreams.

"Bet on yourself every time. You might not have people advocating for you. But if you advocate for yourself, I think people will feed off that confidence," Nicole said.



PHOTO CREDIT: MADISON CANTRELL

DESYRÉE NICOLE, EMU BASKETBALL ALUM, AT "ASK ME ANYTHING," A Q&A SESSION, IN THE STUDENT CENTER AUDITORIUM ON FEB. 7.

Nicole attended EMU as a guard for the women's basketball team and majored in pre-med. During her time at Eastern, she later changed her major to fine arts with a focus on graphic design due to the difficulty of doing her pre-med lab work while on the road for the NCAA tournament.

After graduation, in 2016 she founded a luxury menswear brand named after her little brother, Todd Patrick. So far the brand has had collaborations with the Detroit Pistons, been worn by multiple celebrities like Big Sean and Kevin Hart, and Nicole has even been featured in Netflix's "Next in

Nicole said. "But it wasn't something that I thought was if it didn't work out, it's over."

According to the website, the brand's focus is on how the past molds the future. Nicole credits her time at EMU for helping mold her career.

"I think Eastern Michigan was such a pivotal time in my life of learning how to overcome adversity. As well as just finding out who I am as a person. So when you talk about the past molding the future and the elements in the brand, I think I take so much of what I learned and continue to develop it, not be afraid to fail. I think that's why it has mold the brand

EMU agrees to \$6.85 million settlement in Title IX cases

AARON HUGHES
MANAGING EDITOR

Eastern Michigan University has settled lawsuits filed by two dozen former and current students who accused the school of mishandling sexual assault complaints, university officials confirmed Friday in a written statement.

The Detroit Free Press reported this week that the deal involved a \$6.85 million payment by the university. On Friday, university officials declined to reveal specifics about the settlement, citing a confidentiality agreement that was part of the deal.

According to the statement the university did release, included below, EMU reached an agreement that covered all of the Title IX cases filed in the wake of a series of sexual assault accusations against former Eastern students in 2020. As those cases moved through the Washtenaw County criminal court system, students who said they were assaulted filed the Title IX civil suits claiming that the university failed to properly investigate their complaints.

The cases sparked multiple on- and off-campus protests by students.

The Echo reached out to the university's Chief Diversity Officer, Dwight Hamilton, who oversees multiple offices including the Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention & Response. Hamilton joined the University in September 2023.

When asked for information on how EMU handled the settlement, Hamilton said he could not discuss the case due to the "confidentiality agreement that precludes me from speaking about the settlement."

Melissa Thrasher, the university's executive director of media relations, responded to questions with the following statement, sent by email:

"Due to the settlement structure, we are unable to discuss it," she said in the

statement.

"There is no question that campus sexual assault is a serious challenge in our nation and must unite us in a powerful commitment going forward," Thrasher said. "We will conduct these and other ongoing efforts and will keep our Title IX office functioning effectively and efficiently, providing holistic, caring services to all who seek them out."

The email included EMU's Title IX lawsuit statement.

The complete statement from Eastern Michigan University:

Eastern Michigan University has reached an amicable resolution with all the plaintiffs

involved in the Title IX-related lawsuits against the University. This resolution covers all of the ongoing Title IX lawsuits. We look forward to continuing our commitment to provide exemplary and caring Title IX services to all who seek them on our campus.

The original complaints also lead to 2022 agreements in which the Sigma Kappa sorority and Theta Chi fraternity settled lawsuits involving 24 claims of sexual assault. The original accusations included complaints that the assaults occurred in those houses. Incidents were also claimed to happen in Delta Tau Delta house, which also settled. Alpha Sigma Phi disassociated from EMU after the allegations were made public.

Other defendants in that lawsuit included former Title IX Director Melody Werner, who left the university in 2019, former Greek Life coordinator Kyle Martin, who left in 2019, the entire Board of Regents, outgoing EMU Police Chief Robert Heighes, who left in 2021, and former Deputy Chief Daniel Karrick, who left in 2021.

In 2021, four former EMU students were accused of raping and touching women without consent. Three of the men, Dustyn Durbin, Thomas Hernandez, and D'Angelo McWilliams, a former Washtenaw County Sheriff's deputy, faced criminal charges.

[Read the full story on the easternecho.com](#)



PHOTO CREDIT: CAROLINE MURREL

PROTESTERS GATHER ON THE STEPS OF WELCH HALL IN SEPTEMBER 2021 AFTER MARCHING ACROSS THE EMU CAMPUS FROM PRAY-HARROLD TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT THE HANDLING OF SEXUAL ASSAULT COMPLAINTS ON CAMPUS.

NEWS: International Student Association hosts annual Colors in Harmony cultural event - *pg. 2*



SPORTS: Eagles add 14 newcomers to football program after Late Signing Day period - *pg. 3*



REVIEWS: 'Upgraded' is a perfect match for Valentine's Day- *pg. 4*





What's the Move?
Feb. 12 - 18

SARAI YANES
DIGITAL EDITOR

"A Part of the Sky Called Orion" - Feb. 12

Are you a fan of the stars? The EMU Planetarium presents a sky lore program covering Greek, Egyptian, and Inupiaq cultures that observes a part of the sky called "Orion." Tickets for the event are \$5. The planetarium is in the Mark Jefferson Science Complex, room 402 at Eastern Michigan University. The show runs from 7 to 8 p.m.

Hops and Cops - Feb. 13

Get to know some of the campus police officers with the company of rabbits! Located in the EMU Student Center on the first floor in the space across from the bookstore, the event will take place from 1 to 3 p.m.

EMU Jazz Ensemble - Feb. 13

Feeling musical? On Feb. 13, enjoy a free jazz concert with performances from the EMU Jazz Ensemble. This concert will be at Pease Auditorium from 7:30 to 9 p.m.

Self Love and Drag - Feb. 13

Self Love and Drag will be featuring a professional drag show and student performances as well. Enjoy other self-care necessities and walk the runway! From 7 to 10 p.m., join the EMU LGBT Resource Center in the Student Center Ballroom.

Winter Symphony Orchestra Concert - Feb. 15

Join the EMU Symphony Orchestra on Feb. 15, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at the Pease Auditorium for its winter concert. The concert will feature Mozart's Overture to The Magic Flute, Adolphus Hailstork's Symphony No. 1, and competition winner Ju Yeun Kang.

Soul Food and Spoken Word Night - Feb. 15

Celebrate the history of Soul Food and Spoken Word at the EMU McKenny Ballroom on Feb. 15 from 6 to 8 p.m. The CORE and Brotherhood and Sisterhood collaboration aims to honor Black History Month by sharing food and stories. The event is free to the EMU community, and RSVP is required.

Colors in Harmony - Feb. 17

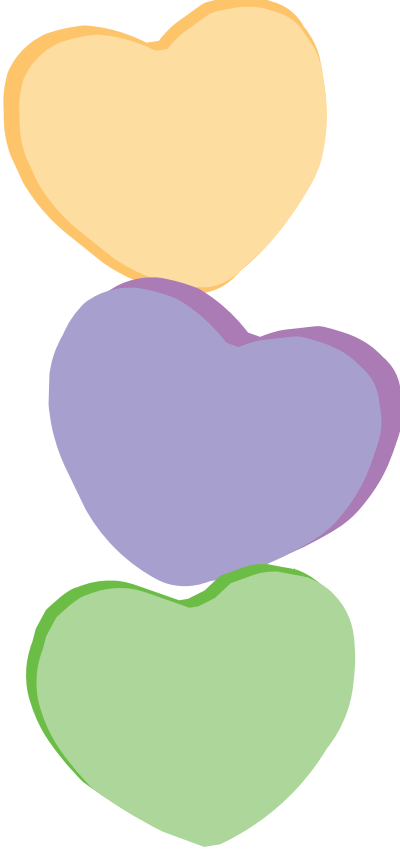
The International Student Association at EMU is hosting Colors in Harmony where diverse cultures come together to perform and showcase their traditions. After the showcase, there will be a gala that includes food. Tickets for students are \$12 and tickets for non-EMU students are \$15. Doors open at 5 p.m.

"Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea" - Feb. 15 - 18

Join the EMU Theatre at the Judy Sturgis Hill Building - Legacy Theatre from Feb. 15 - 18 for its current show, Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea. Tickets range from \$12 to \$20 and the showtimes vary, for more information visit EMU Theatre Current Season.



Check out more news at easternecho.com. We update our website daily!



International Student Association hosts annual Colors in Harmony cultural event

VICTORIA SMITH
CONTENT EDITOR

The International Student Association at Eastern Michigan University will be bringing back its Colors in Harmony event on Feb. 17.

Colors in Harmony is an annual cultural event aimed at highlighting diverse cultures on Eastern's campus.

The event will begin with a show in the Student Center Auditorium. Eastern students who first auditioned for the Association will perform a variety of talents for attendees, such as singing, dancing, and magic. Board members of the Association will act as emcees.

After performances conclude, the celebration will move to the Student Center Ballroom where a Unity Walk will occur. During the walk, students will showcase their traditional clothes.

"[We] basically bring everyone together, let people meet new friends. We give a way for students to show off their culture, to show off their talents, to teach each other and teach other people about their culture," Sara Herzallah, vice president of the International Student Association, said.

Although chips and water will be provided during the show, this year also includes the International Gala after the Unity Walk. Different cuisines will be served, such as

Mediterranean food and South Asian food. Beverages, such as soda and tea, will also be available.

The Association decided to implement the gala this year due to increased turnout at their events.

During the previous school year, around 100 individuals would normally attend events; however, throughout this school year, the Association has seen around 230 to 240 individuals attending.

"We decided to make this bigger this year and do the gala since we saw a lot of people are enjoying our events, and a lot of people are coming ... and also to serve dinner for everyone," Herzallah said.

This year marks the 22nd year of the annual celebration, with two earlier years being missed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's an event where you see Eastern students' talents and as well as learn culture, but also have fun, honestly..." Herzallah said.

The event will begin in the Student Center Auditorium. Doors

will open at 5 p.m., and the event will run from 5:30-8 p.m. The gala will follow, running from 8:30-11 p.m.

Tickets cost \$12 each for Eastern students and \$15 for non-Eastern students. They can be purchased online through the University's box office.



PHOTO CREDIT: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION

EMU professor uses grant to study gun violence in Asian American communities

AMEERA SALMAN
CELLAR ROOTS EIC

Eastern Michigan University professor Tsu-Yin Wu received a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to continue her research on the topic of firearm violence prevention in Asian American communities.

The focus in Asian American communities for Wu is inspired by her interest in working with underrepresented groups, plus the increased experiences of racism and hostility toward Asian Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"For the longest time, I always cared about underserved populations, in this case Asian Americans ... but very recently [during] this COVID-19 pandemic, the racism plus the firearm increase made my effort directed toward this topic area," Wu said. "Asian Americans do want to feel safe and [buying firearms] is one of the forms they may take on for action."

The five-year grant will enable Wu to continue conducting clinical surveys as she did during the early COVID-19 pandemic.

Wu authored two papers published in the National Library of Medicine which cover her original research: "Examining Racism and Firearm-Related Risks Among Asian Americans During the COVID-19 Pandemic" and "Understanding the Intersectionality of COVID-19 Racism, Mental Distress, Alcohol Use, and Firearm Purchase Behavior Among Asian Americans."

Wu's research program will be a two-part clinical study taking place over five years. Phase one will actively collect data from participants, and phase two will focus on intervention implementation.

Phase one will collect data in a new way, attempting to understand the cause of firearm violence for the participants.

"In phase one, we are going to do 'photovoice,'" Wu said. "You're probably familiar with surveys, interviews, but this is like we are asking people to go out, take photos, and show us the root causes of the firearm violence."

Phase one will also use the support of technology at EMU to create quantifiable, viewable data of the study.

"The other part of phase one we are

gathering information is using the GIS, the Geographic Information System, [with the help of EMU's] Dr. Xining Yang," Wu said. "The very significant part of his effort is using the geology kind of data, environment data, to see where the cluster of firearm incidents or violence is happening."

The two methods in phase one will work to inform the interventions necessary for the communities studied.

"So we are combining the 'photovoice,' people using the subjective perception to illustrate through photo, and we are also going to ask them to come to sessions and share with us what the photos mean, and the other part is using the environmental data mapping to kind of put the two together," Wu said. "We are going to integrate those data and put it toward developing interventions."

The study will be based in Michigan, and Wu hopes that the results can one day be modeled for a wider region.

"We could do a really good job, and then once we find this model is working or that the intervention we did is working, then it could be adaptable," Wu said.

Wu will also be working with community

partners, including the Asian Communities toward Innovative Visionary Environment (ACTIVE) Coalition to help address public health concerns in Asian American communities. The ACTIVE Coalition consists of community leaders, local health professionals, staff members, and legislators.

Community partner organization members will serve on the study's advisory board, providing input throughout the five-year project.

Legislation is a key aspect for the work Wu is doing moving forward, and she hopes to see more support from legislators in the future.

"We really need them to come on board because what we're doing has policy implications," Wu said. "Support comes from working together toward health equity."

This is not the only grant that Wu is currently working on. Another program is one that provides translation support to families and individuals seeking services in healthcare.

"I think it's really rewarding to see that our work makes a difference in peoples' lives," Wu said.

Victoria Walton visits EMU for artist lecture

MADISON CANTRELL
PHOTO EDITOR



PHOTO CREDIT: MADISON CANTRELL

V WALTON, A MULTIDISCIPLINARY BLACK, QUEER, AND DISABLED ARTIST, VISITS EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY FOR AN EVENING ARTIST LECTURE AND Q&A SESSION TO SPEAK ABOUT THEIR PRACTICE IN HALLE LIBRARY'S AUDITORIUM ON FEB. 6.

Victoria or V Walton, a multidisciplinary ceramic sculptor, also creating video works, visited Eastern Michigan University on Feb. 6 for an evening artist lecture and Q&A session in Halle Library's auditorium.

Walton was invited by EMU's School of Art and Design and the Department of Women's and Gender Studies to speak about their practice.

Walton is based in Baltimore, Md., and received their MFA in Ceramic Art from Alfred University and BFA in Ceramics from Towson University. As a black, queer, and disabled artist, Walton's work aims to represent their identities and lived experiences, while drawing inspiration from the people around them.

"I reflect on my work now and how it has evolved over the years as an exploration of my own personal identity to a wider survey of the black experience," Walton said.

Walton is an adjunct professor and community organizer. They focus on creating inclusive workshops and spaces for black and disabled artists. A way that

Walton pays attention to accommodations in lectures is by describing their works in words alongside photographs of their works.

Throughout the lecture, Walton describes the evolution of their work and practice, focusing on the change in their intentions.

"Now as a large-scale sculptor, I constantly think about the relationship of the work to the viewer," Walton said. "I've found that the more similar the scale is to the viewer the more that we find ourselves living through the lens of the piece and putting ourselves in the mindset of the artist's intention even subconsciously."

Danny R.W. Baskin, EMU's Gallery Program Director, and Margeaux Claude, EMU's Assistant Professor of Ceramics, facilitated the event.

Claude opens the Q&A session with the question, "As I work with students who are looking to venture into sensitive territory, can you tell us a little bit about how you felt space to do that in your work or how you created that space for yourself and how young artists might approach that?"

"At the time, It came out of necessity. It was a personal investment I was making," Walton said. "Now that I'm exhibiting, I'm realizing that I'm being vulnerable with people who will receive it and not receive it so just be aware," Walton said.

To attend future events put on by EMU galleries, visit their website www.emugalleries.org/. To view Walton's work, visit their website www.victoriawaltonstudio.com, or their Instagram [@victoriawaltonstudio](https://www.instagram.com/victoriawaltonstudio).

Spotlight: Health Administration Student Organization

SHAYLA MOSTYN
NEWS REPORTER

For over 41 years, the Health Administration Student Organization (HASO) at Eastern Michigan University has worked to help students understand the value of healthcare.

All of HASO's events coincide with their mission to promote healthcare administration through education, public awareness, advocacy, and public service to the EMU community. As of right now, the organization is focused on rebuilding and re-branding HASO to EMU students. While HASO was founded in 1983, the organization's membership numbers were affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Health administration is not as known, so I feel that bringing new things to the table is definitely more intriguing to students," LeAndre Brown, president of HASO, said. "The business side of healthcare is not talked about as well, I think bringing different aspects of different healthcare fields; definitely improves our standout."

One of HASO's events currently in the works is their collaboration event in March with the Midwest Chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives (MCACHE).

The mission of MCACHE is to be the lead in professional membership for healthcare executives. Their goals include promoting and conducting high ethical standards, advancing leadership and management in healthcare, and promoting their missions.

"They serve as a role model for healthcare students as well as provide management skills," Brown said.

Brown and the rest of HASO's executive board are focused on bringing more attention to

what the organization has to offer EMU students. From workshops to career networking, the organization hopes to have everyone take something important from everything they do.

"You do not have to be a health administration major to join... The only requirement is to be an Eastern Michigan student and to want to see HASO grow," Brown said.

To stay up to date on all of HASO's events coming up, follow them on TikTok and Instagram [@haso_emu](https://www.instagram.com/haso_emu)



PHOTO CREDIT: LEANDRE BROWN



EMU women's basketball downs South Alabama for a Challenge win

BLAKE MCQUEARY
SPORTS EDITOR

It was a bit of a crossover episode in Ypsilanti, Mich., on Saturday, Feb. 10, as the University of South Alabama women's basketball team visited the George Gervin GameAbove Center for a Mid-American Conference - Sun Belt Conference Challenge matchup with the Eastern Michigan University women's basketball team.

It marked the second part of the MAC-SBC Challenge as 12 MAC women's basketball programs hosted 12 SBC teams, while the 12 MAC men's basketball squads traveled to 12 SBC teams.

Junior center Tayra Eke (Madrid, Spain) would lead the Eagles offensively, finishing with 13 points while adding four rebounds and two assists.

Including Eke, EMU saw five Eagles notch double-digits

in points as sophomore guard Olivia Smith (Fort Wayne, Ind.) added 12 points, senior center Kennedy Myles (Cincinnati, Ohio) and junior guard Olivia Westphal each notched 11 points, and sophomore guard Dara Capaldi (East Detroit, Mich.) chipped in 10 points.

The Eagles would also attack the glass as they outrebounded the Jaguars, 30-18, as junior forward Treasure Thompson (Joliet, Ill.) grabbed 11 rebounds while Myles finished with 10 rebounds. Myles currently ranks second in the MAC with 8.7 rebounds per game, while it also marked her third-straight game with a double-double.

EMU found its bread and butter inside the paint as they would outscore the Jaguars on points in the paint, 38-22.

After starting the game down 7-6, the Eagles would go on a 14-0 run to end the first quarter with a 20-7 advantage. The second quarter was a game of runs as South Alabama would fight back with a 6-0 run, but the Eagles answered the door with a 12-0 run that ultimately lead to a 36-22 lead at

halftime.

The third quarter would consist of back-to-back blows for both squads as the Jaguars would cut the deficit within seven points, 45-38, but the Eagles produced yet another run, 11-0, that contributed to a promising 56-40 lead entering the fourth quarter.

South Alabama would make it a nervous final quarter for the Eagles, but it wasn't enough as EMU took the win over the Jaguars, 81-69.

EMU improves to a 6-16 overall record (2-9 MAC) while South Alabama drops to 8-17 on the season (1-11 Sun Belt).

The Eagles will now return to conference play as they will host Northern Illinois at home on Saturday, Feb. 17, inside the George Gervin GameAbove Center at 1 p.m. That matchup is the first part of a doubleheader where the men's basketball team will faceoff against Bowling Green State University shortly after at 3:30 p.m.



PHOTO CREDIT: JAY MANEA

EMU'S TAYRA EKE (32) GOES UP WITH THE BALL AGAINST AKRON'S LANÆ RILEY (5).



PHOTO CREDIT: JAY MANEA

EMU'S TAYRA EKE SHOOTS OVER THE TOUGH AKRON DEFENSE.

Eagles lose close call to Toledo, 91-87

CHARLES BOYKINS
SPORTS WRITER

The Eastern Michigan University men's basketball team fell in a valiant effort to the Toledo Rockets at the George Gervin GameAbove Center on Feb. 7, with the game ending 87-91 respectively.

Junior guard Tyson Acuff (Detroit, Mich.) led the way for the Eagles with 24 points during a 40-minute performance. He also added eight rebounds and five assists. The 24-point outing from Acuff now marks his 25th straight game scoring 10 points or more.

Sophomore guard Orlando Lovejoy (Detroit, Mich.) had a notable performance as he electrified the Eagles through the loss having 16 points, six assists, and three steals.

Arne Osojnik (Ljubljana, Slovenia) had 14 while being 4-for-8 from beyond the arc. Another double-digit contributor was Jalin Billingsley (Cleveland, Ohio) with 13 points and eight rebounds, including another ten-point performance from Yusuf Jihad

(Farmington Hills, Mich.)

The Eagles unfortunately suffered from issues at the line due to their foul troubles. The team managed to go 3-for-9 from the free throw line (33.3%). However, the Rockets were freed of that issue capitalizing on the trips to make about monumental 22-for-29 from the free throw line, shooting 75.9%.

The Rockets would have two 20-point scorers apiece in Tyler Cochran and Ra'heim Moss as they lead the way offensively for Toledo, causing struggles for EMU's defense all night long.

After the game the Eagles fell to 9-14 overall and a 2-9 Mid-American Conference (MAC) record, while the Rockets improved to 15-8 overall and 9-2 in the MAC.



PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY

#55 ORLANDO HOLDING THE BASKETBALL WITH PRIDE.

Eagles add 14 newcomers to football program after Late Signing Day period

BLAKE MCQUEARY
SPORTS EDITOR

It was yet another mirrored day of Christmas for high school athletes from around the country as Wednesday, Feb. 7, marked the Late Signing Day period, and for the Eastern Michigan University football program, they will add 14 new faces to the program roster.

After the Early Signing Period in December where the Eagles would see 30 players sign their National Letter of Intent, the EMU football program officially brings in 44 new players for the upcoming 2024 season.

The Eagles will see three new linebackers, two new defensive backs, two new defensive linemen, two new offensive linemen, two new wide receivers, a kicker, a quarterback, and a running back arrive at 'The Factory.'

Additions on offense include University at Buffalo transfer quarterback Cole Snyder, kicker Rudy Kessinger from Bishop

Watterson High School, NC State University transfer running back Delbert Mimms III, Hope College offensive lineman transfer Jack Storey, offensive lineman Nicholas Sutherby from Saline High School, Ohio University transfer wide receiver Tyler Walton, and wide receiver Carson Wilson from Parkview High School.

On the defensive side of the ball, Iowa State transfer defensive lineman Jefferson Adam, defensive back Emil Burton from Romulus High School, Arizona State transfer linebacker James Djonak, defensive lineman Reggie Garner from Southfield A&T, defensive back Elisiah Lovett, Coastal Carolina transfer linebacker JT Killen, and linebacker Colin Main from Frankenmuth High School.

EMU currently has the fifth-ranked overall recruiting class in the Mid-American Conference while holding the top transfer class in the conference, according to 247sports.

The Eagles will return to their routine in mid-March for their first spring practice which includes a series of 15 practices over the span of four weeks leading up to the annual spring football game in April.



Check out more
EMU sports
coverage and
features on our
website!

EMU women's basketball suffer overtime loss to Akron

ELENA DAVIS
SPORTS WRITER

A nail-biting game ultimately led the Eastern Michigan University women's basketball team to fall to the University of Akron Zips in overtime at home by one point inside the George Gervin GameAbove Center on Wednesday, Feb. 7.

The Eagles (5-16, 2-9 Mid-American Conference) witnessed four players reaching double-digit scoring, led by Tayra Eke (Madrid, Spain), who achieved a double-double with 17 points and 11 rebounds. Dara Capaldi (East Detroit, Mich.) added a career-high 14 points. Kennedy Myles (Cincinnati, Ohio) contributed from the bench with

another double-double, recording 13 points and 13 rebounds. Lachelle Austin (Redford, Mich.) brought in 11 points, along with a season high of eight assists.

Eke grabbed five offensive rebounds leading an offense that generated numerous second-chance opportunities for Eastern Michigan. The team secured 14 boards translating them into 17 second-chance points.

The Green and White's defense limited Akron to a mere 40% shooting from the field. Despite attempts to recover their misses on the offensive glass, the Zips struggled, securing only nine offensive rebounds and converting them into just eight second-chance points.

Eastern Michigan took a 4-2 lead and then went on a 6-0 run in the first quarter, highlighted by a basket from Myles, to stretch their lead to 10-2. Although they experienced a slight dip in momentum, the Eagles finished the quarter with a 19-14 advantage. The majority of EMU's first-quarter points were scored near the basket with 14 of their 19 points coming from inside the paint. Despite the Zips' efforts to narrow the gap, the Eagles maintained a slim 30-29 lead at halftime.

After halftime the Zips briefly led 31-30, but Eastern Michigan responded with an 11-0 run highlighted by a three-pointer from Capaldi to surge ahead 41-31 in the third quarter. Although the Zips narrowed

the gap before the period ended, the Eagles maintained a 45-44 lead heading into the fourth quarter.

EMU yielded their lead as Akron forced overtime, tying the game at 56-56 by the end of the fourth quarter. Despite this, the Green and White capitalized on their opportunities in the paint, scoring eight of their 11 points from close range.

In the first overtime period, Akron got ahead 61-56. However, Eastern Michigan came back by going on a 7-0 run, capped by a three-pointer from Austin, to reclaim a 63-61 lead. Akron regained control, outscoring the Eagles 7-4 for a final score of 68-67, handing Eastern Michigan the loss.

Eagles Sports Tips and Tales

BLAKE MCQUEARY
SPORTS EDITOR

EMU Lacrosse opens season with a clash against Notre Dame

The Eastern Michigan University women's lacrosse team began their second official season with a matchup against the No. 7 nationally ranked University of Notre Dame on Friday, Feb. 9, in South Bend, Ind. as the Eagles fell to the Fighting Irish, 21-6.

The reigning 2023 Mid-American Conference Freshman of the Year Mackenzie Blackwell would pick up right where she left off as she scored two goals for the Eagles while redshirt freshman Kelsea Dague made some noise in her debut for EMU as she finished the match with two goals and two assists.

Dague wasn't the only one making their collegiate debut for the green-and-white as four true freshmen saw the field. Karly Low, Roya Khaleeli, and Kendall Nagle were the others to see action.

It marked the first-ever meeting between the two while it was also the first time EMU has faced an Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) opponent.

The Eagles are now 0-2 in season-opening games after last year's 18-4 loss to Niagara in EMU's inaugural game.

It's a little mix of good and bad as the Eagles set a new season-opener record for goals scored against Notre Dame with six, meanwhile the 21 goals given up to the Fighting Irish are the most points surrendered in the programs new history.

Next up, the Eagles will travel to Pittsburgh, Pa., for a matchup against Duquesne University on Thursday, Feb. 15, at 3 p.m.

EMU Track and Field's Paige Marchant sets new women's mile record to conclude three-meet weekend

The Eastern Michigan University track and field program had a busy weekend as the teams competed in three different meets on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 9-10. The Eagles would send athletes to Fayettevilleville, Ark., for the Tyson Invitational hosted by the University of Arkansas, Nashville, Tenn., for the Music City Challenge hosted by Vanderbilt University, and to Boston, Mass., for the David Hemery Valentine Invite hosted by Boston University.

EMU freshman distance runner Paige Marchant would have herself a career day as her performance in the mile run at the David Hemery Valentine Invite marked the fastest mile in EMU women's track and field history. Marchant clocked a 4:38.91 mile time, which broke a Canadian under-20 time that has stood since 2003, stands as the second fastest time in the Mid-American Conference (MAC) this season, and also marked her fourth program top-10 finish this year.

11 different Eagles notched personal-best records on Friday, with the women capturing seven and the men four. The Eagles also had three performances finish inside the program top-10 to go along with two first-place finishes and five top-three finishes.

On Saturday, the Eagles had 10 runners notch personal-best records with two top-three finishes and one program top-10 mark.

EMU men's basketball falls to UL-Monroe in MAC-SBC Challenge matchup

The Eastern Michigan University men's basketball team took part in the second leg of the inaugural Mid-American Conference-Sun Belt Conference Challenge as they faced off against the University of Louisiana at Monroe where they fell to the Warhawks 82-76.

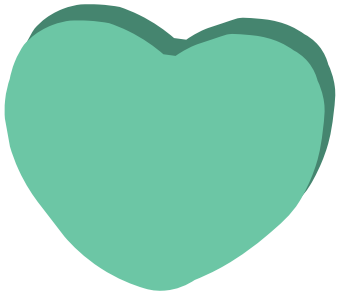
Junior guard Tyson Acuff continued his streak of 10+ points as the Detroit native netted a game-high 29 points on seven made three-pointers, while freshman Arne Osojnik finished with a career-high 22 points.

Acuff's 26 consecutive games scoring at least 10 points are the most by an EMU player since 2000. He also notched his 11th game with at least 23 points as he stands as one of seven players in the nation with 11 games of 23-plus points.

Junior forward Jalin Billingsley chipped in 10 points and hauled in a career-high nine rebounds for the Eagles as he was just one rebound shy of his first career double-double.

With the loss, EMU moved to a 9-15 overall record on the season while UL-Monroe improved to 9-14 overall. Saturday's matchup marked the third meeting between the two as EMU trails the all-time series, 3-0.

Next up, the Eagles will return to Ypsilanti, Mich., on Saturday, Feb. 17, as they host Bowling Green State University inside the George Gervin GameAbove Center. Tipoff will be at 3:30 p.m., and it will follow the women's game that is scheduled for 1 p.m.



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Review: 'Upgraded' is a perfect match for Valentine's Day

MARIAM FAKHREDDINE
COLUMNIST

Camila Mendes and Archie Renaux play the two main characters in "Upgraded," which was released on Prime Video on Feb. 9. Mendes portrays struggling artist Ana Santos, who has a master's degree in art history. The majority of this film is set in London and New York City. For Valentine's Day, this romantic comedy is a perfect movie choice.

Synopsis
Ana Santos is a struggling artist interning at Erwin's Art Gallery; she lives with her sister at the beginning of the film. Ana chose to pursue an internship because she hopes to open her art gallery someday. She establishes her credibility with Marisa Tomei's portrayal of Claire Dupree, the art director, by showing her dedication and ambition. Ana succeeds in doing so, earning a position as Claire's assistant during this journey to London to sell an art collection.

When she arrived at the airport on this trip, Claire Dupree's two other assistants had reserved her a spot in the economy class. Those assistants are comparable to Cinderella's two vile stepsisters. The employee upgraded Ana to first class when she was checking in for her ticket. This was a dream for Ana because she could never afford first class. Before she could board her flight, the first class had its bar and spa. Ana spilled her bloody mary after bumping into William Laroche (Archie Renaux) while sipping her drink.

William would never forget Ana after that. William was beside her when she boarded the plane and settled into her seat. It was obvious they had chemistry when she began talking to William, but there was one tiny issue. Ana told William a lie that she was the art director of

Erwin's Art Gallery in New York. This lie took a spiral of its own throughout the whole movie.

Highs
Marisa Tomei's performance was astonishing due to her accent and sense of flair. In the recent Spiderman movies, Tomei plays Aunt May; in "Upgraded," she plays the opposite character, a relentless businesswoman. Her acting performance was outstanding. Claire was an impressive art director who instilled fear in her interns. Next, Mendes's portrayal of Ana Santos was flawless since her character embodied a perfect combination of humor and ambition. Ana's character development was a recurring theme in the movie. By the end, she had transformed from a scared and insecure young woman to a powerful and courageous woman. Her character Ana and William's chemistry was charming and cute. It developed into the ideal romantic comedy.

Another highlight of this film was the plot progression. Everything seemed to flow naturally and created an easy-to-follow storyline between the characters. We meet Ana at the beginning of the film as a lost and upset character and watch her, as the story unfolds, go through all the circles of emotion upon meeting new characters. She goes from the burden of living at her sister's house to taking an unexpected trip to London to meeting a famous art director to jeopardizing her job and then eventually regaining it all the while attempting to balance a relationship in the works with the art director's son, William. This seems like a lot to take in, but the story balances all of these story elements naturally.

The set of this film, specifically in London at the house of William Laroche, had a very luxurious collection of paintings in the library of the house as well as an all-around beautiful interior design of the home that shouts money. Living there, William's mother Catherine (played

by Lena Olin), portrays, on the outside, an eccentric and pompous actress/model married into riches. On the inside, however, she displays sympathy and guidance towards our main character Ana, and eventually helps the story come a full 180 from where it all began.

Lows
Some of the lows of this film mainly include predictability. Although the plot unfolded nicely, it was predictable. A struggling woman gets the opportunity of her life, almost blows it, and meets a love interest are all elements we've seen time and time again. This movie was entertaining but average at best. Some of the dialogue felt unfinished or otherwise rushed in certain scenes, and the acting of certain characters, mainly Suzette (played by Rachel Matthews), was cliché and predictable.

Another low of this film was the underdevelopment of Ana's love interest, William. William should have gotten more screen time, and there should have been a little more detail surrounding their struggling relationship for this movie to be a true romantic comedy. Although there were scenes between Ana and William that shed light on their situation, there was much left on the table that could have taken this film in another direction.

Verdict
Overall, this movie was funny, light-hearted, and entertaining but left certain elements missing.

Rating: 7 out of 10

Mariam Fakhreddine is a film and theater reviewer for The Eastern Echo. She has worked as a news and features reporter for The Echo for two years.



Opinion: Songs for all to admire on Valentine's Day

MARIE WHITE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

If you're hopelessly in love or super single, some of these songs will fit perfectly into music rotation on or around Valentine's Day.

"Being In Love" - Wet Leg
This song embodies butterflies flying in your stomach. Throughout the song, there's upbeat instrumentals and repetitive lyrics that make you just want to dance (and be in love). This song is a short one being two minutes long, but it's a perfect repeat song, with lyrics like "Being in love" (repeating) and "I feel like someone has punched me in the guts. But I kinda like it 'cause it feels like being in love." These lyrics embody the feeling of new bright love and make you want to jump into a field with your lover.

"Glue Song (feat. Clairo)" - beabadoobee

This song features soft instrumentals that feel like you're floating through the clouds. The lyrics "I've been stuck by glue - Right onto you" are simple but so catchy that they

get stuck into your head. With repetition of glue holding this love together, "I guess I'm stuck forever by the glue." Clairo and beabadoobee's vocals together simply sound angelic within the instrumentals; everything together makes a beautiful song for lovers.

"Daylight" - Taylor Swift
This song is one of the many from Swift's album "lover" that simply embodies pure love. The lyrics "I've been sleeping so long in a 20-year dark night- and now I see daylight" embody finding the person who helps you come into the light and let go. Throughout the song, it's a story of finding that person who lights up your life in every way possible. This is one of those songs that truly make you twirl and kick your feet in love.

"We're In Love" - boygenius
This is the purest love song I've ever heard, with lyrics such as "You could absolutely break my heart- That's how I know that we're in love." Throughout the song, Lucy Dacus' voice angelically describes these forms of love that turn your soul into putty. "There is something about you that I will always recognize" conveys that this is the love that follows you into the next life. This song truly

embodies love to me, and is my favorite song on this list (and maybe ever).

"Kaleidoscope" - Chappell Roan
This song is about falling in love, and how it doesn't always turn out as planned. This song feels like acceptance in whatever happens, even when being deeply in love with someone who doesn't reciprocate the feelings. The lyrics "Love is a kaleidoscope" embodies this feeling of change, which is the main basis of love; this one is for the lost lovers. It features somber instrumentals and raw vocals that will tug at your heart.

"My Love Mine All Mine" - Mitski
This song is the epitome of self love. This whole song is a true love song to yourself, that you have the capability to love yourself and give that love as you please, "Nothing in the world belongs to me- But my love mine, all mine, all mine." With its soft synth and drum instrumentals, this song is one to repeat and soak in for your own love.

No matter how you feel this Valentine's Day, you can queue up your favorite songs and add some from this list to get you through the day.



BLOCK E





New Episodes Weekly!

Eagletainment

Host Queso Tone (left) with guest Dillan Reed (center) and host Julez DeShetler (right)



Soaring Eagles

Hosted by Sarai Yanes (left) with guest MaKayla Stevens.



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Marie White
editor@easternecho.com
Editor-in-Chief

Aaron Hughes
managing@easternecho.com
Managing Editor

Victoria Smith
content@easternecho.com
Content Editor

Blake McQueary
sports@easternecho.com
Sports Editor

Emma Owens
copy@easternecho.com
Copy Editor

Sarai Yanes
digital@easternecho.com
Digital Editor

Alex Kreps
podcast@easternecho.com
Podcast Editor

Madison Cantrell
photo@easternecho.com
Photo Editor

Ameera Salman
cellarroots@easternecho.com
Cellar Roots EIC

Christine Uthoff
advisor@easternecho.com
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